

VZCZCXRO7844
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK
DE RUEHAM #0277 0290926
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 290926Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4333
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 0131

S E C R E T AMMAN 000277

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/27/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [IR](#) [IS](#) [SY](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: IRAN'S LARIJANI PAYS A LOW-KEY VISIT TO AMMAN

REF: A. AMMAN 219
[1](#)B. AMMAN 92
[1](#)C. AMMAN 41

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (S/NF) Summary: Although it was little-known in Jordan, speaker of the Iranian parliament Ali Larijani paid a low-key visit to Amman on January 9, accompanied by the speakers of the Syrian and Indonesian parliaments. Despite several attempts by the Jordanian government to turn off the visit, the group ended up meeting with parliamentary leaders. Before cutting their visit short, the group reportedly asked that Jordan not cut off diplomatic relations with Israel. End Summary.

Unwelcome Visitors

[1](#)2. (U) Al-Jazeera and Jordanian local media reported that speaker of the Iranian parliament Ali Larijani visited Amman on January 9. Larijani was reportedly accompanied by Mahmoud Al-Abrash, speaker of the Syrian parliament, and Agung Laksono, speaker of the Indonesian parliament. The group, which officially came under cover of the Asian Parliamentary Union, was received by Jordan's lower house speaker Abdulhadi Al-Majali, deputy speaker Abdullah Al-Jazy, and assistant speaker Nasser Al-Qaisi.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) Qaisi (strictly protect) told poloff on January 27 that the Jordanian government tried multiple times to prevent the delegation from coming, insisting that the timing (in the middle of the Gaza crisis) was not right. In the end, the visiting delegation forced the issue by calling Jordanian officials just before their flight took off from Damascus to demand landing rights at the Marka military airport in Amman. The flight plan was reluctantly approved, although bitterness still lingers over the abrupt nature of the request, according to Qaisi.

[1](#)4. (S/NF) Once in Jordan, the group pressed relentlessly for a meeting with King Abdullah, but the request was rebuffed by Royal Court for "scheduling reasons," Qaisi said. Majali, Jazi, and Qaisi were dispatched instead to provide the bare minimum of acceptable protocol equivalency, but they made clear that they had no authority to speak on behalf of the government. Qaisi portrayed the meetings as cordial but said that Larijani repeatedly asked to see the King "until the last hour" of the visit. When it was clear that no contact with executive branch officials was forthcoming, the group cut its visit short and returned to Damascus.

A Message for the King

[1](#)5. (S/NF) At the end of the meeting at Jordan's parliament, the group relayed a message that they claimed they had planned to deliver to the King, emphasizing repeatedly that

it was not to be leaked. According to Qaisi, the group asked that Jordan resist the calls of local Islamists to expel the Israeli Ambassador and cut diplomatic ties. The group emphasized that the Jordanian-Israeli relationship was a valuable channel of communication that needed to be left open. Note: At the time, Jordan's Ambassador to Israel was on leave in Jordan, causing local press to speculate (wrongly) that he had been recalled (Ref B) over events in Gaza. In a move to placate public opinion, PM Nader Dahabi had separately hinted that relations with Israel may need to be "reconsidered" during a speech to parliament days earlier (Ref C). End Note.

Comment

¶6. (S/NF) Larijani's visit to Amman is unusual. Jordan and Iran maintain diplomatic ties, but visits by official Iranians of any kind are almost unheard of. In our repeated attempts to confirm the details of the visit over several weeks, Jordanian officials were unaware that Larijani had entered the country.
Beecroft